

VALE MAJOR MICHAEL GRAHAM IZZARD

Michael Graham Izzard was born in Melbourne on 29 July 1951 to George and Ruth Izzard, a brother to Sandra and Gary. ‘Mike’ gained his primary and secondary education at Mont Albert Central School in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs, Box Hill High from 1964 to 1966 and then Camberwell Grammer School in 1968. At 17 years of age Mike commenced officer training at the Royal Military College (RMC) on 24 January 1969. Having his RMC training curtailed by a football injury, Mike was transferred to the Officer Cadet School (OCS), Portsea, at the end of 1971. However, he did not arrive at Portsea until the end of 1972 as he, along with 37 other Portsea applicants were redirected to undertake their officer training at the newly raised OCS Wing of the National Servicemen’s Officer Training Unit (OTU), Scheyville, near Windsor in NSW, on 11 February 1972. Mike along with 25 other successful officer candidates finally left Scheyville on the 1st December 1972 to graduate as part of the 1/72 OCS Portsea Class (at Portsea) on 16 December 1972.



Mike met Patricia Anne Betts on a blind date. ‘Trish’ was born on 31 July 1949 in Cobar, in mid-NSW, North-east of Sydney, to John and Jean Betts. She had six siblings: Eric, Robert, Alan, Ian, Peter and Marie and was educated at Cobar Intermediate High School. Trish undertook Nursing training at Canberra Hospital. After Mike’s graduation from Portsea, he and Trish married on 30 December 1972 in Trish’s home- town of Cobar. They honeymooned in Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. They shared their honeymoon with Scheyville classmate, Garry Van Ree and his then new wife Robyn. Mike’s FX holden having broken down a few days before the wedding meant that he

and Trish were to forego their honeymoon. But, Garry said “No, come and join us”. So, the four headed off in Garry’s dated VW beetle.



On graduation, Mike was allocated to the Signals Corps. His posting thereafter included:



- The School of Signals at Balcombe on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsular on 16 December 1972.
- 5 Signals Regiment in Sydney on 7 May 1973.
- The Australian Defence Assistance Group, Papua New Guinea (ADAG PNG) on 30 September 1973.
- Long-Term Schooling at the then Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology on 4 January 1976.
- 6 Signals Regiment, in Melbourne in December 1979.
- The Department of Defence (Central) Army Office in Canberra on 29 January 1982.
- 2 Signals Regiment at Watsonia Barracks in Melbourne on 29 January 1986.
- His final posting, WEF 31 January 1988, was back in Canberra, with Operations Branch at Army Office.

- After 21 years and 9 days, Mike retired from the Army with the rank of Major on 2 February 1990

The Izzard family grew during Mike's early years in Army with Geoffrey and Jennifer being born whilst in Papua New Guinea and the addition of five further children: Anne, Catherine, Stephen, Christopher and John whilst Mike was posted to Melbourne and later Canberra.

Life was never dull in the Izzard household. With both Mike and Trish having been good at sports, the seven children naturally followed. Trish never forgot a date and ensured that birthdays, wedding anniversaries and Christmas Cards were sent and that children were where they were supposed to be for sport. Both Mike and Trish were coaches for teams that their children were in and were also involved in sports administration.



Mike loved Dining In nights and often held them at home with Army friends in attendance. Son Chris was the waiter, bringing out the courses on the ring of a bell!

Post Army, Mike put his hard-earned military skills to work and went into Project Management. He finally retired in 2021.



In the last few years of his life, Mike's health was not good. Due to peripheral vascular disease, he had his left leg amputated above the knee. Then he began suffering from multiple chronic diseases. Mike died in Canberra of acute respiratory failure as a result of acute aspiration pneumonitis on 16 December 2025. Meanwhile, Trish was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December 2024, but she was a fighter and was determined to stay alive for three milestones: Christmas Day 2025, their wedding anniversary on 30 December and to see in 2026. Having past those milestones, surrounded by her children, Trish passed away on 5 January 2026.

A Celebration of Life was held on 31 January 2026 at the Belconnen Soccer Club in Canberra for



both Mike and Trish. Mike's OCS/OTU classmate Mike Prain organised a dinner the evening before, attended by: (L to R)

Jim Gilchrist, Graham Ferguson, Neil Leckie (Editor of The Scheyvillian, who was in Canberra over the weekend), Neil Turner (former OTU DS), Garry Van Ree, and Richard Boyce. The dinner attendees were all present at the Celebration of Life.